Digital Equity Forum At-Large Meeting #2

April 7, 2022, 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

The following meeting notes are intended to convey the key ideas and discussions that occurred during the meeting. For those interested in accessing the full meeting, <u>you can view a Zoom recording online</u> by using the passcode 9\$jp0cXp. The meeting was also recorded by TVW and <u>you can watch the TVW recording of the meeting here</u>.

Attendees

Panelists

- Dr. Karen A. Johnson (she/her/Beloved), Director, Washington State Office of Equity
- Ernie Rasmussen (he/him), Digital Equity Manager, Washington State Broadband Office
- Carolyn Cole (she/her), Assistant Director for Equity Access, Washington State Office of Equity
- Sean Ardussi (he/him), Digital Equity Supervisor, Washington State Broadband Office
- Devin Gombosky (he/him), Administrative Assistant, Washington State Broadband Office
- Tevin Medley (he/him), Consultant, The Athena Group
- Dr. Anthony Campbell (he/him), Consultant, The Athena Group

Accessibility Support

- Dawn Piegdon, ASL Interpreter
- Molly McGuire, ASL Interpreter
- Pablo Muñoz Barragán (Spanish Interpreter)

Digital Equity Forum members

- Cindy Aden (she/her), Professor of Practice (and former State Librarian) University of Washington, iSchool
- Jim Bamberger, Director, Office of Civil Legal Aid
- Representative Matt Boehnke, Washington State House of Representatives, 8th Legislative District
- Tiffany Circle (she/her), Senior Project Administrator, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Jon Claymore, Executive Director, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Office of Native Education
- Eu-wanda Eagans (she/her), Senior Vice President of Workforce Development, Goodwill of the Olympics and Rainier Region
- Elizabeth Gordon (she/her), Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment
- Representative Mia Gregerson, Washington State House of Representatives, 33rd
 Legislative District

- Jennie Harvell, Washington Healthcare Authority
- Jesus Hernandez (he/his), CEO, Family Health Centers
- Darryl E. Hunt, King County Informational Technology Regional Services, King County Department of Information Technology
- Jessica James Zinda, Chief Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer, DSHS
- David Keyes (he/him), Digital Equity Manager, City of Seattle Information Technology Digital Equity Group (Seattle IT)
- Sharayah Lane, Manager, Programs, Philanthropy Northwest
- Trevor Lane, County Director/Associate Professor, Washington State University
- Cathy MacCaul (she/her), Advocacy Director, AARP
- Laura Ruderman (she/her), CEO, Technology Alliance
- Senator Shelly Short, Washington State Senate, 7th Legislative District
- Maria Siguenza, Executive Director, Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs
- Bre Urness-Straight (she/her), EdTech Director, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- John Sheller, KCLS
- Anna Zivarts, she/her, Disability Mobility Initiative, Disability Rights Washington

Members of the Public (entry based on what attendee shared via chat introductions)

- Brian Anderson
- Sami Bailey, she/her, Washington Association for Community Health
- Mario Bañuelos
- Gerald Bradford
- Bruce
- Keitha Bryson (she/her) retired public school teacher. Representative to the Washington State Senior Lobby, Washington State School Retirees Association legislative committee, League of Women Voters - Thurston County: Civics Education and DEI committees, Tumwater Hopes Coalition Chair
- Courtenay Burns (she/her)
- Atul Deshmane
- Payton Dorothy
- Stanislav Fritz
- Chris Ganoung
- Carissa Hahn (she/her)
- Eileen Kazura (she/her) WA DOH, State Office of Rural Health
- Kris Keillor. I use male pronouns. I am graduating this spring with a BSEE and am a member of the City of Bellingham's Broadband Advisory Workgroup.
- Charlotte Kerney, Commission on African American Affairs
- Sabrina Roach

Meeting Details

Meeting began at approximately 1:05 to allow people to get into the Zoom meeting room and get settled after there were some technical difficulties related to the Zoom meeting link in the initial invitation.

Welcome and Acknowledgments

- Carolyn welcomed attendees to the meeting and then introduced the Co-Chairs Dr. Karen A. Johnson (she/her/Beloved), Co-Chair, Director, Washington State Office of Equity and Ernie Rasmussen (he/him), Co-Chair, Digital Equity Manager, Washington State Broadband Office
- Ernie Rasmussen delivered a land acknowledgment and then introduced Dr. Karen A. Johnson.
- Dr. Karen A. Johnson introduced herself and expressed appreciation for everyone in attendance. She invited members of the public to reach out and share any feedback with the Digital Equity Forum by sending an email to digitalequity@commerce.wa.gov and visiting the <u>Digital Equity Forum website</u> to learn more about the effort.
- Dr. Johnson expressed excitement for <u>Substitute House Bill 1723</u> that was signed into law by Governor Inslee on March 31 and is focused on increasing the accessibility and affordability of internet, cable, cell phone services, devices, and training.
- Dr. Johnson transitioned to the next phase of the meeting (How to Participate on Zoom or By Telephone) by introducing Carolyn Cole.

How to Participate on Zoom or By Telephone

- Carolyn Cole expressed appreciation for the Digital Equity Forum Co-Chairs and then further introduced herself and provided detailed guidance on how attendees could best participate in the meeting.
- Carolyn provided a clear overview on the active accessibility features, including but not limited to raise hand feature, chat, muting, video on/off, brief orientation to communication services being provided today, and building in pauses for phone participants to contribute.
- Carolyn introduced both ASL Interpreters (Dawn Piegdon and Molly McGuire), as well as the Spanish Interpreter (Pablo Muñoz Barragán).
- Carolyn explained that raised hands would be monitored by Sean Ardussi and that the facilitators would be deliberate about taking pauses for anyone attending by phone to make statements or ask questions.
- Carolyn reminded attendees that they may send their comments by email to digitalequity@commerce.wa.gov if time runs out.
- Carolyn transitioned to the next phase of the meeting (Public Comment) by introducing Tevin Medley.

Public Comment

- Tevin Medley introduced himself and then shared the meeting goals.
 - Goal 1: Update attendees on project progress since the last Forum meeting on December 9, 2021.
 - Goal 2: Introduce revised draft of Mission, Vision, and Values based on February and March small group workshop feedback.
 - o Goal 3: Introduce ideas for a recommendations development framework.
 - o Goal 4: Provide clarity on the next steps in the project and the role of Forum members and the public.
- Tevin reintroduced the Spanish Interpreter, Pablo Muñoz Barragán, and reminded attendees that Pablo would be available to assist in any capacity that is needed.
- Tevin then asked Pablo to provide an overview, in Spanish, of how individuals could participate in the public comment phase of the meeting.
- Tevin asked members of the public to use the raise hand feature and wait to be called upon (Sean will monitor for raised hands).
- Tevin informed everyone that pauses will be taken for anyone that is attending by phone to provide their public comment.
- Tevin requested that members of the public keep their comments between 2 3 minutes maximum. Tevin offered that, "We want to have as many people provide public comment as possible. If needed, staff will remind commenters to conclude their comments."
- Tevin opened the floor for public comment.
 - Stanislav Fritz spoke first.
 - "One perception I have...originally from Minnesota...is that Washington State does not treat the internet as a utility. Unlike in Minnesota where the Public Utility District owns the fiber and then allows others to use it."
 - "Washington could possibly implement measures to own the infrastructure along the final mile and address those issues."
 - o Gerald Bradford spoke second.
 - Works for Fresh Start Professional Services (non-profit in the Seattle area) and is currently working to train young people about how to install internet infrastructure equipment.
 - Expressed how pursuing digital equity could result in activating and employing young people - "Replace the corner with opportunities."
 - Emphasized that initiatives need to be supported by technical assistance and policy measures.
 - Expressed hope that Washington elected officials and representatives will be bold in their efforts to improve digital equity for the current and next generations.
 - o Atul Deshmane spoke third.
 - "It would be great to have the report as soon as possible."

- Carolyn Cole shared that the report will be available in the early Fall, after all public engagement has been conducted and the Digital Equity Forum members develop recommendations.
- "I am seeing both federal and state monies are largely constrained by maps that are from the telecoms that do not accurately reflect coverage. This must be addressed."
- "Many people who are underserved are in neighborhoods that are adjacent to neighborhoods with better access."
- Proposed using higher resolution maps to address internet coverage.
- o Bruce spoke fourth.
 - Lives in a small town in Eastern Washington. Lives in an underserved internet environment.
 - "Despite there being increased funding for internet coverage, ISPs are focused more on providing services to areas where revenues can be realized and that leaves behind communities with less revenue potential."
 - "Must find a way to incentivize companies to make investments, both in technology/infrastructure upgrades and providing coverage."
- Stanislav Fritz spoke again.
 - "There is sometimes a false definition of broadband."
 - "Geostationary/satellite internet providers with very long ping times (1000 milliseconds or more) and other services with low speeds should not be labeled broadband."
 - "If providers could be combined into a large internet co-op, there could be great potential."
- Tevin concluded the public comment period and then re-introduced Carolyn Cole.
- Carolyn Cole expressed appreciation for all the public comments, and then introduced Sean Ardussi who oversaw the Introductions phase of the meeting.

Introductions

- Sean Ardussi introduced himself and the other staff members from the Washington State Broadband Office, as well as the consultants from The Athena Group.
- Sean invited Digital Equity Forum members who are attending via Zoom and can use the chat feature to submit their name and pronouns in chat.
- Sean invited any members attending via phone or who cannot use Zoom chat to share their name and pronouns
- Sean briefly referenced the Timeline and Milestones document that was transmitted with the meeting invitation, calling attention to May 10 and 11 community listening sessions. Please visit the <u>Digital Equity Forum Timeline and Milestones document</u> to learn more.
- Dr. Karen A. Johnson took a moment of personal privilege to recognize and thank the elected officials who were in attendance.

Sean then transitioned to the next phase of the meeting (Project Updates –
 Accessibility and Language Access) by re-introducing Carolyn Cole.

Project Updates – Accessibility and Language Access

- Carolyn provided a summary of how feedback from the first at-large meeting in December 2021 was used to improve accessibility and language access.
 - Accessible meeting materials.
 - o Spoken language interpreting (Spanish and more languages as requested).
 - Translation services (Spanish and more languages as requested) for communications.
 - o Community survey will be available in top 15 languages and ASL video.
 - American Sign Language interpreting (ASL).
 - o Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) captioning
 - Accessible Zoom practices that respect the accessibility needs of all participants, such as hosts providing more descriptive narration for those who have visual disabilities or are unable to attend via video.
- Carolyn emphasized how Digital Equity Forum meetings are establishing new standards for accessible meeting practices.
- Carolyn shared other accessibility features that are in-progress and will soon be deployed.
- Carolyn transitioned to the meeting break and explained that Anthony Campbell would be providing a project update on the first two Community Listening Sessions after the break.

Meeting Break

- A meeting break took place from 1:50 pm until 1:55 pm.

Project Updates – Community Listening Sessions

- Anthony Campbell introduced himself and shared the Digital Equity Forum Community Agreements that were established during the December 2021 meeting and were then expanded based on feedback during and after that meeting.
 - Listen with curiosity and willingness to learn.
 - o Do what you need to show up fully.
 - o Resist the desire to interrupt.
 - Speak from your own story and use "I" statements.
 - Avoid speaking for another individual or group.
 - Be open to the wisdom in each person's story.
 - o Not everything will be comfortable to discuss.
 - o Prioritize impact over intent.
 - o Listen. Reflect. Apologize. Do better.
 - Recognize, respect, adapt, and be inclusive to our differences in technology access, comforts, and communication practices.

- Anthony provided an overview of the first two community listening sessions that took place on March 29th and March 30th.
 - o You can view a Zoom recording online by using the passcode 9\$jp0cXp.
 - o You can access the PowerPoint Presentation for this meeting online.
- Anthony offered a window into the data that was shared by participants, as well as emergent themes.
- At the conclusion of the presentation, Anthony invited questions and reactions from Digital Equity Forum members.
 - o Digital Equity Forum member Laura Ruderman spoke first.
 - Laura shared her perspective that much of the listening session data reflected issues she perceived as dealing with digital quality, as opposed to digital equity.
 - Laura emphasized the need for the Digital Equity Forum to avoid scope creep.
- Anthony then transitioned to the next phase of the meeting (Proposed Consensus Decision-Making Model) by introducing Tevin Medley.

Proposed Consensus Decision-Making Model

- Tevin Medley introduced himself and then introduced the proposed consensus decision-making model, both the way it works and why we think it will work.
 - You can view a Zoom recording online by using the passcode 9\$jp0cXp.
 - o You can access the PowerPoint Presentation for this meeting online.
- After concluding his presentation of the proposed consensus decision-making model, Tevin invited comments from Digital Equity Forum members.
 - o Digital Equity Forum member Jessica James Zinda shared in chat.
 - I like it
 - o Digital Equity Forum member Cindy Aden shared in chat.
 - Sounds good
 - O Digital Equity Forum member Eu-Wanda Eagans asked, "If you have multiple ideas, how do you decide between them?"
 - Tevin explained that the use of the model would become clearer during the discussion of the connection between the Digital Equity Forum's values and consensus decision making.
 - o Digital Equity Forum member Elizabeth Gordon shared in chat.
 - I like it
- Digital Equity Forum Co-Chair, Dr. Karen A. Johnson shared an African proverb.
 - o If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.
 - We are committed to being deliberate about "going together," so we will have ample space to have discussions about elements.
- Tevin concluded this phase of the meeting and transitioned to the meeting break.

Meeting Break

- A meeting break took place from 2:55 pm until 3:00 pm.

Digital Equity Forum - Mission, Vision, and Values

- Tevin introduced the next phase of the meeting, wherein the mission, vision, and values would be discussed with the Digital Equity Forum members.
 - o You can view a Zoom recording online by using the passcode 9\$jp0cXp.
 - o You can access the PowerPoint Presentation for this meeting online.
- Tevin began by focusing on the Digital Equity Forum mission.
 - Tevin introduced the original mission, what was heard from Digital Equity Forum members during the small group workshops that were held on February 24 and March 24, and how the mission statement was revised based on that feedback.
 - Original mission
 - The mission of the Digital Equity Forum is to make policy recommendations for the Washington state Legislature to consider that will advance digital connectivity for unserved and underserved communities, including historically disadvantaged communities throughout the state.
 - Revised mission
 - The mission of the Digital Equity Forum is to make policy recommendations for the Washington state Legislature to consider that will allow <u>all</u> communities the digital connectivity required for full civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.
- Tevin invited questions and reactions from Digital Equity Forum members.
 - Digital Equity Forum member Laura Ruderman spoke first.
 - She suggested replacing "for" with "to" in the first line.
 - Digital Equity Forum member Senator Shelly Short spoke second.
 - Is the expectation that this will be achieved right away or is there a need for some kind of timeframe?
 - Digital Equity Forum member Cindy Aden spoke third.
 - She suggested the inclusion of references to lifelong learning and the need for students to have access.
 - o Digital Equity Forum member Jon Claymore spoke fourth.
 - Jon reinforced the underserved and underrepresented piece, and how it is needed.
 - He also shared how in education, there is the expression of "most in need."
 - o Digital Equity Forum member Laura Ruderman spoke again.

- Laura asked about the expectations and practices associated with this section of the meeting.
- Digital Equity Forum Co-Chair, Dr. Karen A. Johnson responded to Digital Equity Forum member Laura Ruderman's question.
 - Dr. Johnson shared that the proviso that established the Digital Equity
 Forum is very clear about the mission of this project.
 - Dr. Johnson explained that the team will explore having the language of the mission mirror what is in the proviso.
- Tevin moved the meeting forward by discussing the Digital Equity Forum vision.
 - Tevin introduced the original vision, what was heard from Digital Equity Forum members during the small group workshops that were held on February 24 and March 24, and how the vision was revised based on that feedback.
 - Original vision
 - All Washington state residents have equitable access to broadband internet and technology, as well as the digital tools and skills to use them effectively.
 - Revised vision
 - All Washington state communities will have equitable access to broadband internet technology as well as the tools and skills needed to participate in our digital society before 2028.
- Tevin invited questions and reactions from Digital Equity Forum members.
 - Digital Equity Forum member Eu-wanda Eagans spoke first.
 - My community may be connected, but I am not.
 - Carolyn Cole (Assistant Director for Equity Access, Washington State Office of Equity) reminded attendees that what is being shared are drafts of the vision and values and invited feedback.
 - Digital Equity Forum member Cindy Aden spoke next.
 - "Waiting on someone who is an expert to express whether "broadband internet and technology" is the optimal term. Maybe connectivity? Maybe being specific about the type of connection?"
 - Cindy expressed that maybe there is an opportunity to make this (the vision) cleaner.
 - Digital Equity Forum member Elizabeth Gordon spoke next.
 - "One of the things that strikes me here, is the need for a section with definitions. Does "equitable access" have enough "punch" to capture what we're seeking to do? Need common language to help with our common vision."
 - o Digital Equity Forum member David Keyes spoke next.
 - "I agree with the point about having an associated dictionary of terms would be useful. What is not sitting quite right for me with "equitable access" – it's not just about being able to buy... some nuance would

be useful. Might need to be more specific about devices and/or tools."

- Digital Equity Forum member Jennie Harvell spoke next.
 - "What about the following, "...equitable access to affordable broadband as well..." Referencing Washington residents rather than communities is clearer."
- Tevin moved to the final portion of this phase of the meeting by discussing the Digital Equity Forum values.
 - Tevin introduced the original values, what was heard from Digital Equity Forum members during the small group workshops that were held on February 24 and March 24, and how the values were revised based on that feedback.
 - Original values
 - Equity is not equality. Equity requires developing, strengthening, and supporting policies and procedures that distribute and prioritize resources to people in identify groups who have historically been and currently are marginalized, including tribes
 - Equity requires the elimination of systemic barriers that have been deeply entrenched in systems of inequality and oppression; and
 - Equity achieves procedural and outcome fairness, promoting dignity, honor, and respect for all people.
 - Revised values
 - **Center** community voice.
 - Develop, strengthen, or support policies and procedures that prioritize resources to people who experience the effects of past and current marginalization.
 - **Eliminate** barriers that have been deeply entrenched in systems of inequality and oppression.
 - Promote dignity, honor, and respect for all people.
 - Ensure economic viability of both urban and rural Washington state.
 - Address access to affordable, reliable, redundant and scalable/future-proof broadband technologies.
 - Tevin invited questions and reactions from Digital Equity Forum members.
 - Digital Equity Forum member Jennie Harvell spoke first.
 - "Follow on Cindy's earlier comment regarding education... we talk about economic viability, so it would be nice to also discussion the value of education."
 - Digital Equity Forum member Darryl Hunt spoke next.

- Add "Programs" to bullet #2 to read, Policies, Programs, and Procedures
- Digital Equity Forum member Elizabeth Gordon spoke next.
 - "I think someone mentioned earlier that availability does not mean that there is access. Just because the service is there doesn't mean folks can get it for a variety of reasons."
- Digital Equity Forum member David Keyes spoke next.
 - "Promoting values in systems that sustain equity, not just systems that provide equity at the moment. On "ensuring economic viability" – not just the geographic area of Washington state, but all people who call Washington "home." On "access to affordable" – there's nothing about sufficient, unless that's implied in "reliable."
- Digital Equity Forum member Jennie Harvell spoke next.
 - "Recommendation, to provide access to affordable, reliable broadband needed to engage in essential services including health related services, education, etcetera."
- Digital Equity Forum member Elizabeth Gordon spoke last.
 - "I like future proof, the continuous need to upgrade leaves folks behind."
- Tevin thanked all the members for their feedback, reminded that the vision and values are still just drafts, and urged Digital Equity Forum members to provide any additional feedback via digitalequity@commerce.wa.gov
- Tevin then transitioned to the next phase of the meeting (Recommendations Development Framework Introduction.)

Recommendations Development Framework – Introduction

- Tevin introduced the next phase of the meeting, wherein a possible recommendations development framework was introduced.
 - You can view a Zoom recording online by using the passcode 9\$jp0cXp.
 - o You can access the PowerPoint Presentation for this meeting online.
- Tevin reminded everyone that the Digital Equity Forum is tasked with developing recommendations for a report that is due by January 1, 2023.
- Tevin explained that instead of relying solely on personal and professional perspectives, we want to have recommendations that are grounded in shared values of those associated with this project.
- Tevin then shared a graphic (<u>slide 28 in the presentation</u>) that captures how the Digital Equity Forum's values could be leveraged to develop, refined, and review recommendations.

- Tevin emphasized that we want to make sure we all understand how values can become our guide for the Digital Equity Forum as we advance to the recommendation development stage.
- Tevin then invited feedback from Digital Equity Forum members.
 - Digital Equity Forum member Cathleen MacCaul spoke first.
 - Cathleen inquired about whether online safety needs to be integrated somewhere in the values.
 - o Digital Equity Forum member Darryl Hunt spoke next.
 - Darryl expressed that it would be helpful to have examples of the meaning of the values and an example of how a value could be used to make a decision between two different recommendations.
 - "For example, what exactly is meant by "Center community voice?"
 - Tevin explained that it will change between different kinds of contexts and situations.
 - Darryl expressed that it would still be helpful to have some more specificity.
 - o Digital Equity Forum member Eu-wanda Eagans spoke next.
 - "It seems like we are missing the desire to be different, how are we being bold, innovative, creative to make this work? Should any of those be a value of how we operate?"
 - o Digital Equity Forum member Cindy Aden spoke next.
 - "We need online safety but also security; there is cost with that security that must be made available--especially to anchor institutions like schools, libraries and healthcare."
 - o Digital Equity Forum member Elizabeth Gordon spoke next.
 - "This may be moving out of scope, but one thing that is really needed often is tech support availability that is plain talked and easy available."
 - Digital Equity Forum member Bre Urness-Straight spoke next.
 - "Prioritize education and life-long learning through the addressing digital inequities."
 - Digital Equity Forum member Laura Ruderman spoke last.
 - Laura inquired, "Is the website going to be updated on who are the Digital Equity Forum members? Needs to be more accessible."
 - Sean Ardussi (Broadband Digital Equity Specialist, Washington State Broadband Office) responded and said the website would be updated to include a roster of Digital Equity Forum members.
- Tevin closed this phase of the meeting and re-introduced Carolyn Cole to lead the next phase of the meeting Next Steps.

Next Steps

- Carolyn expressed appreciation for the individuals who attended the forum and provided feedback.
- Carolyn and Sean Ardussi updated the group on important next steps.
 - The next community listening sessions will be held on May 10 (5:00 6:30 pm) and May 11 (12:00 noon 1:30 pm). More information about those two listening sessions will be provided as the dates get closer.
- We will provide more information about our community survey. Please help us share the survey with community members.
- The next at-large Digital Equity Forum Meeting will be June 9 from 1:00 4:00 pm.
- Carolyn and Sean encouraged Digital Equity Forum members to spread the word about community listening sessions and the upcoming community survey.
- Carolyn then transitioned to the Closing Remarks and Adjournment phase of the meeting by re-introducing the Digital Equity Forum Co-Chairs, Dr. Karen A. Johnson (she/her/Beloved), Co-Chair, Director, Washington State Office of Equity and Ernie Rasmussen (he/him), Co-Chair, Digital Equity Manager, Washington State Broadband Office.

Closing Remarks and Adjournment

- Dr. Karen A. Johnson expressed how her heart was heavy because she experienced being disconnected due to an unstable internet connection during the meeting.
- Dr. Johnson shared how she felt like today was very focused on process. She recognized the request from Darryl to have examples of values that will be used to make recommendations.
- Dr. Johnson urged the importance of capitalizing on this opportunity to become a leader in the United States, and shared a quote from Nelson Mandela, "Everything seems impossible until it's done."
- Dr. Johnson concluded her remarks by inviting people to not be shy about making suggestions for any improvements.
- Ernie Rasmussen offered some acknowledgements to staff in both offices, partners at Athena, and "most of all" the Digital Equity Forum members.
- Ernie expressed an understanding how not every single comment or question was fully honored and how there is a continuous balancing act between honoring the thoughts of every member and the length of the meeting.
- Ernie shared, "We have a responsibility to be bold and do work that will carry forward and have a positive impact for people and generations we will never meet... to think boldly, to think beyond some of the immediate challenges... we definitely need to address the immediate challenges, but we must all consider the future."

The at-large Digital Equity Forum meeting concluded at approximately 4:00 pm on April 7, 2022.